

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 L-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 EB-07 EA-06 FRB-03 INR-07 IO-10 NEA-09

NSAE-00 RSC-01 OPIC-03 SP-02 TRSE-00 CIEP-01 LAB-04

SIL-01 OMB-01 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 STR-01 /105 W

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R 231910Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7553

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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AMCONSUL BELFAST

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, UK, EC

SUBJECT: LABOR'S PLANS FOR EC REFERENDUM BEGIN TO UNFOLD

REF: LONDON'S 1027

SUMMARY - LABOR PARTY AND GOVERNMENT HAVE BEGUN TO
REVEAL PLANS FOR EC REFERENDUM. LEADER OF HOUSE OF
COMMONS REPORTED THAT HMG PLANS TO INTRODUCE REFERENDUM
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BILL BY APRIL 8. PRIME MINISTER WILSON IS SCHEDULED TO

MAKE STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT JANUARY 23 OUTLINING FURTHER DETAILS OF GOVERNMENT'S REFERENDUM PLAN. PARTY'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) PROPOSED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT PARTY MEMBERS NOT BE BOUND BY DECISIONS OF SPECIAL PARTY CONFERENCE OR BY CABINET RECOMMENDATION. BOTH GOVERNMENT AND PARTY LEADERSHIP ARE CONCERNED THAT EC ISSUE COULD SPLIT PARTY AND ARE SEEKING MEANS TO AVOID CONFRONTATION. END SUMMARY

1. LABOR PARTY NEC JANUARY 22 REVIEWED MEMORANDUM PREPARED BY GENERAL SECRETARY RON HAYWARD WHICH SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR PARTY'S CONDUCT OF EC MEMBERSHIP REFERENDUM. HAYWARD PAPER RECOMMENDED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT:

A. MEMBERS OF LABOR PARTY BE FREE TO CAMPAIGN FOR OR AGAINST CONTINUED UK MEMBERSHIP, IRRESPECTIVE OF RESULTS OF SPECIAL PARTY CONFERENCE OR CABINET RECOMMENDATION;

B. TALLY OF REFERENDUM BE MADE ON COUNTRY-WIDE BASIS, RATHER THAN BY CONSTITUENCY OR BY REGION; AND

C. GOVERNMENT, FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF WHITE PAPER DESCRIBING RESULTS OF RENEGOTIATION, REFRAIN FROM MOUNTING MAJOR PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN FOR OR AGAINST CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP.

2. FOLLOWING NEC MEETING CHAIRMAN FRED MULLEY TOLD MEDIA THAT NEC UNANIMOUSLY FAVORED FREEING PARTY MEMBERS, BUT NOTED THAT THIS POINT, EVEN IF FORMALLY ENDORSED BY NEC, WOULD NOT BE BINDING ON GOVERNMENT, AS CABINET HAS CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO DEFINE RULES OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNMENT. ACCORDING TO MULLEY, NEC WAS DIVIDED ON REFERENDUM TALLY QUESTION, AND THIS AS WELL AS OTHER POINTS WILL BE SUBJECT OF FURTHER NEC DELIBERATIONS. PRESS ALSO REPORTS THAT HAYWARD'S REMARKS AFTER NEC MEETING INDICATED SPECIAL CONFERENCE MIGHT ONLY PROVIDE FORUM FOR INTRA-PARTY DEBATE RATHER THAN ATTEMPT TO SET PARTY POLICY.

3. HOUSE OF COMMONS LEADER EDWARD SHORT ANNOUNCED JANUARY 22 THAT GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO INTRODUCE REFERENDUM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 L-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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BILL BY APRIL 8, EVEN THOUGH RENEGOTIATION MAY NOT BE
COMPLETE BY THAT TIME. THIS DECISION WAS RESULT OF
GOVERNMENT FEAR THAT OPPOSITION MIGHT SEEK TO DELAY
ACTION IN HOUSE AND THAT LORDS MIGHT PROVIDE FURTHER
OBSTACLE TO HOLDING REFERENDUM BEFORE SUMMER VACATIONS.
ADDITIONAL DETAILS AS TO GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS ON
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REFERENDUM ARE EXPECTED TO BE ANNOUNCED TODAY WHEN PRIME MINISTER WILSON IS SCHEDULED TO ADDRESS THIS MATTER IN COMMONS.

4. COMMENT - HAYWARD'S PRINCIPAL CONCERN IS TO MAINTAIN UNITY OF LABOR PARTY, AND HIS PROPOSALS ARE CLEARLY DESIGNED TO MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY OF AN IRREPARABLE SPLIT. NATIONAL REFERENDUM TALLY, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD REDUCE LOCAL PRESSURES ON INDIVIDUAL MPS, AND MINIMIZE CENTRIFUGAL IMPACT IF, AS EXPECTED, ANTI-EC VOTE IN SCOTLAND AND WALES IS HEAVIER THAN IN ENGLAND. FEAR OF SUCH A SPLIT IS VERY REAL AMONG LABOR BACKBENCHERS ON BOTH SIDES OF EC ISSUE. WILSON, WHO IS EX OFFICIO MEMBER OF NEC, WAS NOT PRESENT AT YESTERDAY'S MEETING, BUT REPORTEDLY HAD SEEN HAYWARD'S MEMO AND FOUND IT "HELPFUL." SINCE NEC DID NOT VOTE ON HAYWARD RECOMMENDATIONS, WE ANTICIPATE FURTHER CONSULTATIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN PARTY AND GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING WILSON'S JANUARY 23 STATEMENT.

5. AS WE HAVE REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, INDICATIONS ARE THAT WILSON WISHES TO KEEP UK IN EC AND THAT HE AND CABINET WILL COMMEND THE RENEGOTIATED TERMS TO BRITISH PUBLIC. BEYOND THAT HE WILL BE CONSTRAINED BY THE NEED TO AVOID SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THE PARTY. IT WILL BE DIFFICULT, BUT PERHAPS NOT IMPOSSIBLE, TO ENFORCE COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY ON CABINET OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT. WHILE SUCH AN EFFORT, AS MULLEY NOTED, WOULD NOT CONFLICT WITH PARTY DECISION TO ALLOW FREE CAMPAIGN AND VOTE, IT WOULD RISK RESIGNATION OF SOME CABINET MEMBERS AS WELL AS WIDENING THE BREACH BETWEEN PRO- AND ANTI-MARKETEERS. WILSON'S STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT SHOULD PROVIDE FURTHER CLUES AS TO HIS PLANS.

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